

**International Students – Applying to Prescott College’s Low Residence Programs
Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, PhD Programs**

Q: What level of English proficiency is required?

A: The academic programs at Prescott College are writing intensive and the admissions committee will need to verify that the student’s English speaking and writing skills are at a college level. Students whose native language is not English, or who are not familiar with U.S. schools, need to exhibit competency in the English language with a TOEFL score of at least 500 on the paper-based test, 173 on the computer-based test, or 61 on the internet-based test. The student should arrange to have scores sent directly to Prescott College by TOEFL (the school code is 4639), or may send the original copy issued to the student.

Q: What transcripts do you require?

A: International students are required to have non-U.S. school transcripts evaluated by a professional credential evaluation service. The student is responsible for all costs associated with this service. Bachelor of Arts students with transfer credits from a community college or university will need a course-by-course equivalency; Master of Arts and doctoral students will need a basic statement of comparability.

Recommended credential evaluation service
International Education Research Foundation (IERF)
PO Box 3665
Culver City, CA 90231
Tel: 310-258-9451
<http://www.ierf.org/SFstandard.asp>

Q: Does Prescott College have scholarships or financial aid for foreign students?

A: International students are not eligible for U.S. federal government aid in the form of loans or grants. There are some organizations that offer scholarships to international students such as the Fulbright Scholarship. International students may apply for Prescott College scholarships which range from \$1,000 (bachelor’s degree and master’s degree) to \$4,000 (Ph.D. degree). Scholarships are based on various criteria including some or all of the following: financial need, academic merit, leadership and outstanding accomplishments.

Q: What is an F-1 student?

A: An F-1 student is a nonimmigrant who is pursuing a “full course of study” towards a specific educational or professional objective, at an academic institution in the United States that has been designated by the Citizenship and Immigration services (CIS) to offer courses of study to such students. Once the educational or professional objectives have been attained, the F-1 student is expected by the U.S. government to return to his or her residence abroad.

Q: Do I have to be enrolled full-time? What is a “full course of study”?

A: Yes. Students must register for a minimum of 12 semester credits per term.

Q: I am a Canadian or Mexican citizen. Do I also need to prove financial certification?

A: Yes.

Q: I plan to remain in my home country and only come to Prescott, Arizona for the required residencies. Do I still need to prove financial certification?

A: Yes.

Q: How many times do I have to be on campus in Prescott, Arizona?

A: One three-day residency for low-residency bachelor's students; quarterly three-day residencies for master's students' and a total of seven residencies ranging from four to seven days for doctoral students.

Q: How do I obtain a student F-1 visa?

A: Obtaining a student visa can take many months, so we advise students to begin the admissions application process well in advance of their intended enrollment. Students must first apply and be accepted to the college before the process to obtain a student visa can begin.

Step 1: Apply and be accepted to Prescott College

Step 2: Submit documentation of student's ability to meet educational expenses while studying at Prescott College for the first year. This is called "financial certification." (Students living in Canada and Mexico are also required to document financial certification.) This is the same standard that consular and Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) officers will use to determine a student's financial stability. Students should anticipate that they will be required to present documentary evidence of financial support at the time they apply for a visa and again to the CIS when they arrive in the United States. Funds may come from any dependable source, including scholarships, fellowships, sponsoring agencies, personal funds, or funds from the student's family. Documentation of personal or family funds should be on bank letterhead stationary, or in the form of legally binding affidavit from CIS. It may be wise to get several sets of original financial documents.

Step 3: Upon receipt of financial certification and the tuition deposit, an I-20 Form of Eligibility is issued to the student.

Step 4: After receiving the I-20 from Prescott College, go online to fill out Form I-901 and to submit the \$200 US fee. This must be completed before going to the U.S. embassy or consulate for the visa interview. Students can fill out the form and pay the fee online at www.fmjfee.com. Be sure to print out a receipt from the credit/debit card online payment. Students will need this receipt for the visa interview.

Step 5: Contact the U.S. Consulate or Embassy to schedule an appointment for a visa interview. Take the I-20, proof of payment of SEVIS fee, passport, original financial

documents from the certifying agencies, and evidence of ties abroad (that indicates that student will return to his or her home country) to the visa interview.

Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa

Ties to Your Home Country

Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas, such as student visas, are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. Students must therefore, be able to show that they have reasons for returning to their home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. “Ties” to the student’s home country are the things that bind them to their home town, homeland, or current place of residence: job, family, financial prospects that they own or will inherit, investments, etc. If the student is a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans and career prospects in the student’s home country.

Student Should Speak for Him/Herself

Do not bring parents or family members to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview the student, not the family. A negative impression is created if the student is not prepared to speak on their own behalf.

Know the Program and How it Fits Student’s Career Plans

If the student is not able to articulate the reasons they will study in a particular program in the United States, they may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that they are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. The student should also be able to explain how studying in the United States relates to a future professional career after return home.

Be Brief

Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute of the interview. Consequently, what the student says first and the initial impression created are critical to success. Keep answers to the officer’s questions short and to the point.

Additional Documentation

It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents the student is presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that there will only be about 2-3 minutes of interview time.

Not All Countries are Equal

Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the United States.

Employment

The student's main purpose in coming to the United States should be study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education. The student must be able to clearly articulate a plan to return home at the end of the program.

Q: What do I do at the border?

A: The student must enter the U.S. with the F-1 visa and I-20 to be admitted by the CIS in F-1 status at the port of entry. At check-in at the airport, the student presents the F-1 visa to the airline. On the plane, the student completes a form I-94, which is a white card consisting of two parts, the I-94 Arrival Record and the I-94 Departure Record.

At the port-of-entry the student applies for admission to the U.S. in F-1 status by presenting the passport with F-1 visa, I-20 A-B, and financial documents to a U.S. immigration officer. CIS takes the I-20 School Copy and I-94 Arrival record for CIS processing. The officer then marks the I-94 Departure Record and I-20 ID Copy with the following information: date and place of admissions and a notation that the student was admitted in F-1 status for "duration of status." The CIS officer then gives the I-94 Departure Record, I-20 ID Copy, and financial documents back to the student, who is then considered to have been admitted to the U.S. in F-1 status.

Q: What do I do when I arrive on campus?

A: When the student arrives at Prescott College for Orientation, they must present the required information to Prescott College's DSO, Mary Trevor or Tim Robison. CIS requires that Prescott College maintain records containing specific information and documents relating to each F-1 student to whom it has issued a Form I-20 A-B while the student is attending the school. We will need to make a copy of the Form I-20, passport with F-1 visa page and Form I-94.

3/31/09